United States
Department of
Agriculture

**Soil
Conservation
Service**

Meeting the Challenge:

Report of the SCS Work Force Diversity Task Force

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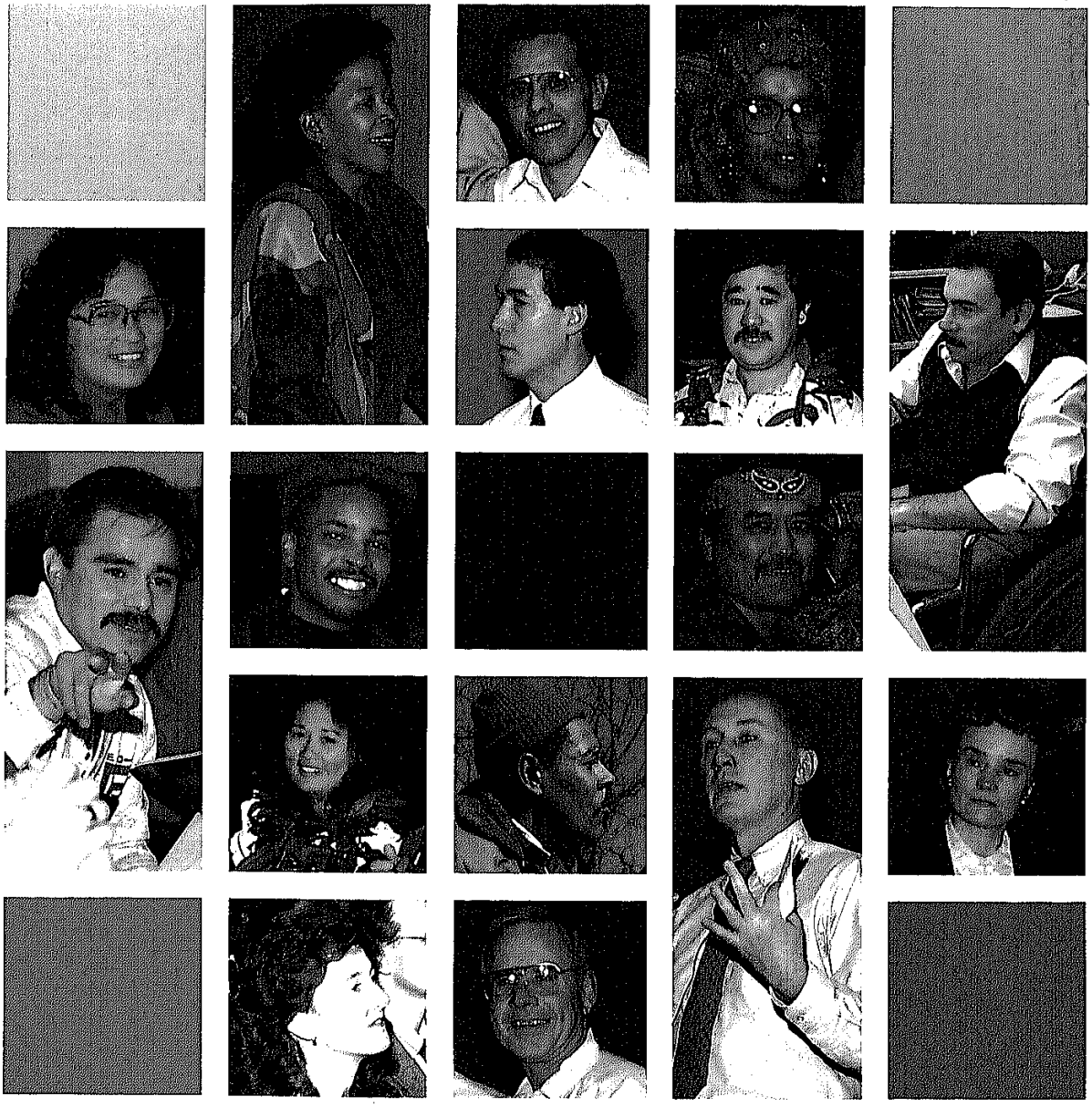

United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C.
20013

Message from the Chief

The demographic changes taking place in our society demand that SCS achieve diversity within its own work force. If we successfully meet this challenge, SCS will retain its competitive edge in the labor market and its preeminence in conservation.

To value and manage diversity requires that we view differences in a positive light. It also requires that we get to know workers as individuals and recognize how they can contribute to carrying out the SCS mission. Each of us needs to begin by looking inward to understand how we have been shaped by our own cultural background. We must recognize some of the unintentional biases and stereotypes we bring into our association with others. Employees who are able to foster a better appreciation for one another's unique talents will be indispensable to SCS and will excel through their effectiveness.

Do not confuse work-force diversity with EEO and Civil Rights. Work-force diversity should not be viewed as a program but as a process that touches every activity and function in SCS. If it is treated as a program, SCS may accomplish its EEO and Civil Rights objectives and still not achieve a diverse work force. We must all share the vision of an agency where every employee is respected, appreciated, and valued for his or her contributions and individuality.

WILLIAM RICHARDS
Chief

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JUL 31 1991

To: William Richards, Chief

The Work Force Diversity Task Force hereby submits its report from the Work Force Diversity Conference held in Sparks, Nevada during the week of November 28, 1990. The Task Force endorses the evaluation and implementation of recommendations from the conference and five additional recommendations for consideration. The report contains:

- Background and History
- Task Force Recommendations
- Highlights of Recommendations by Concern
- Work Group Summary Report
- Conference Evaluation
- Framework Plan

We believe that this report can be the springboard for SCS to launch a major initiative to become the model agency of the future.

On behalf of the Task Force, we would like to express our appreciation for your commitment and support.

Respectfully submitted,

Humberto Hernández

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Charting a Course

The Soil Conservation Service has set a course which will help the agency remain viable and competitive. According to U.S. Department of Labor projections, by the turn of the century women and minorities (who now make up more than half of the U.S. work force) will comprise approximately 85 percent of all new hires. This work force will be vastly different from that of 50-plus years ago when the Soil Conservation Service began.

Twenty-seven years ago, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned employment decisions that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Since then, employment programs have moved through three phases — Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Employment, and now Work Force Diversity.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture responded to the changes in society and in the work force by developing the Framework for Change: Work Force Diversity and Delivery of Programs. This policy sets forth as its goals building a diverse work force at entry, mid, senior, and executive levels and ensuring that this work force delivers programs efficiently, effectively, and fairly by the year 2000.

SCS was one of the first agencies in the Department of Agriculture to take steps to meet the challenge of recognizing, appreciating, and utilizing the benefits of diversity. Top management recognized that to be successful, diversification of the work force must be linked directly to the organization's efforts to adjust to the changing demands of the work environment. To accomplish the stated goals, in November 1990 SCS assembled a broad, culturally diverse cross-section of its employees at one of the largest conferences in its history. The purpose for the meeting, which was held in Sparks, Nevada, was to develop strategies for the agency.

Following that conference, Chief William Richards appointed a task force to address the concerns expressed and to prepare a report containing a recommended course of action. The task force began its work in January and submitted the final report and recommendations in July. Many of the items disseminated over the past few months were identified at the conference and carried out through the efforts of the task force.

This report presents background information, analysis of the present condition by areas of concern, and several significant recommendations. The recommendations were taken from the Work Group Summary Reports (please refer to Appendix B for additional issues and recommendations).

Responding to Change

SCS was born in the Dust Bowl era of the 1930s. The task of applying conservation on the nation's lands was massive, and nearly 100 percent of the employees hired to help were white males.

At the time, life centered around the traditional nuclear family. Few women worked outside the home. Men had to work but were free from family obligations such as child care, doctor's appointments, and elder care. Single income families were forced to move to pursue jobs and opportunities. Each employee was financially responsible for the health and well-being of himself and his family.

SCS offices were often located in remote, rural areas—near farms and ranches—where opportunities for spousal employment, education, and cultural enrichment were limited. In some places, essential services such as transportation and medical and hospital care were totally lacking.

Today's work force is made up mostly of dual career, single, and/or single parent families. As more people enter the job market, fewer support services are available at home and in the community. Employees and potential recruits find it difficult to balance the demands of work with personal or family needs.

While the world has changed, some SCS policies and concepts date back 50 years. The work environment plays a large role in meeting the needs of today's employees. A change in policies and practice is needed to promote a balance between careers and family.

Recommendations:
Adopt flexible work place, flexible tours of duty, and flexible leave schedules. Establish a cultural resource diversity position at NHQ to provide leadership in the development and implementation of a Cultural Diversity Strategic Initiative and at each NTC to provide sensitivity and human relations training. Consider the diversity of communities and provide appropriate information when placing new hires and transferring current employees.

Broadening the Base

Achieving a diverse work force will remain an illusion as long as selecting officials perceive the recruitment and advancement of women, minorities, and the physically challenged as trading quality for quantity. Changes in the work force have increased the number of qualified candidates available to SCS from mixed ethnic backgrounds and underrepresented groups. To successfully attract and retain potential candidates, SCS must expand career opportunities.

In SCS, recruiting is often a secondary responsibility for technical specialists who are trained as soil scientists, soil conservationists, engineers, biologists, or economists. Not only may these employees lack knowledge about the broad spectrum of programs and hiring authorities which exist, but with no formal training in cultural awareness and diversity, they may have difficulty relating to candidates from different backgrounds.

Career opportunities in SCS often depend upon having a background in soils, being mobile, and following the traditional career path. This can limit advancement opportunities for dual career families, the disabled, and other employees with special needs. Also, turnover rates for entry-level employees may be high because these individuals' needs are not recognized.

Recommendations:
Identify and develop new career opportunities. Recruit at higher grades and from sources outside of SCS if necessary. Secure direct hire authority for whatever groups are needed to diversify the work force. Increase sensitivity as to how we treat employees and where they are placed.

Increasing Opportunities

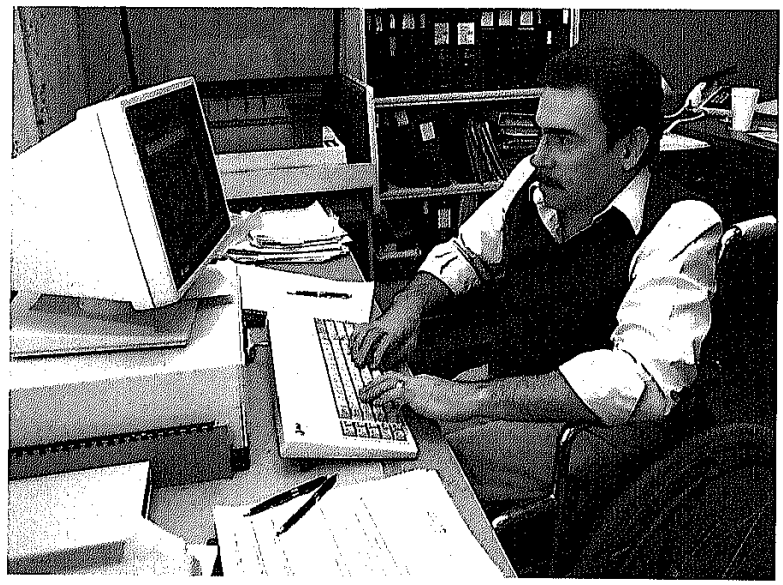
A misunderstanding of personnel processes may inhibit and create barriers to achieving diversity. Lack of uniform and consistent interpretation and application of rules and regulations at all levels can result in mistrust.

The application process—specifically KSAs—may present a barrier to some groups. KSAs require candidates to list personal accomplishments and experiences. Individuals from certain cultures may be uncomfortable with this form of self-promotion.

In the selection process, employees may feel vacancy announcements are written for targeted groups and individuals rather than to fill the requirements of the job. Raters and panels may not reflect the diversity of the work force. States frequently fail to share referrals of qualified applicants. Candidates may not be notified of positions in other states or of other positions for which they may qualify.

Current hiring practices limit SCS's ability to hire qualified candidates from underrepresented groups. SCS needs to assist candidates with the lengthy and cumbersome application process.

Recommendations:
Revise methods of qualifying, classifying, and selecting applicants. Train SCS employees in the preparation of KSAs. Implement a program giving direct hire authority for underrepresented groups. Specify that raters and panels must be diverse.



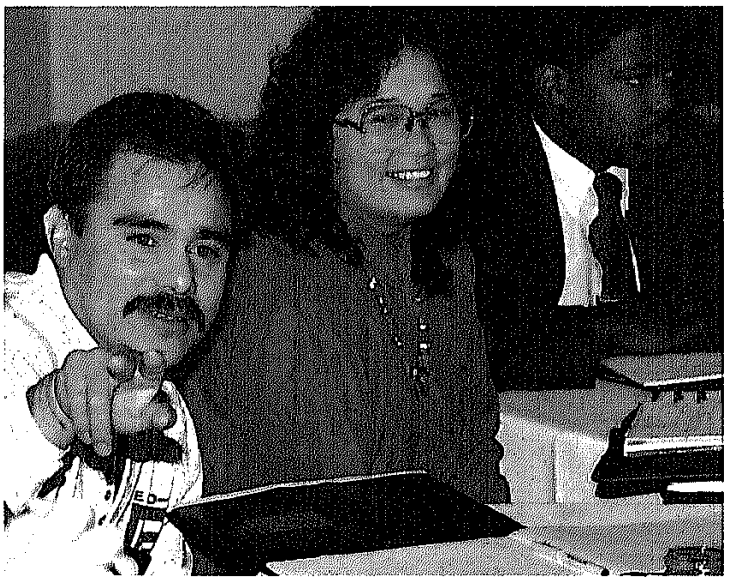
Valuing Diversity

The 480 individuals who attended the Sparks conference learned about the value and benefits of diversifying our work force. Work force diversity means more than having multi-cultural representation at all levels of SCS. It means nurturing communication, understanding, and respect between cultures.

Few other SCS employees have been formally exposed to the concept. Cultural diversity training is not included in orientation and management courses. Trainers and participants often do not reflect the diversity of our work force. Instructors may not have been taught to communicate across cultural lines. New and innovative approaches to training are needed, and training materials must be user-friendly. Technical training needs to reflect the changing mission of the organization.

The lack of cultural sensitivity makes training less effective for trainers and trainees. Inadequate skills minimize employees' abilities to communicate effectively with the public, each other, and management, thus limiting SCS's ability to provide services. Individual development plans do not include cultural diversity training. Educational programs and institutions used for employee training do not meet multi-cultural needs.

Recommendations:
Train all employees on cultural awareness, diversity, and sensitivity. Expand opportunities to promote multi-cultural understanding by detailing employees to areas with diverse cultures. Provide language training. Expand the leadership development program nationwide. Broaden the range of educational institutions available for the USDA Graduate School program.



Building Support

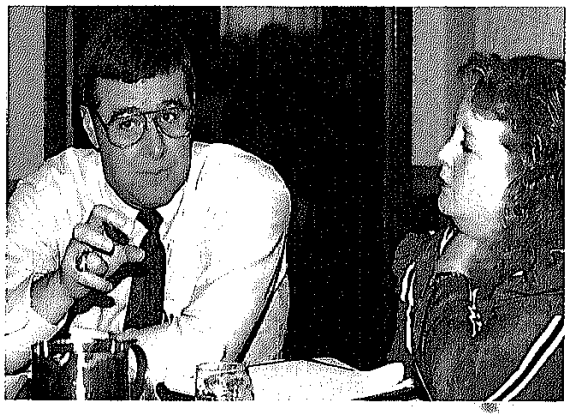
Non-traditional employees (women, minorities, the physically challenged) have not had access to the opportunities and normal paths of progression available to white males. In many instances, the "good-old-boy" network has benefitted only one group. Women and minorities have not been provided ample access and exposure to training and job assignments that would allow for full professional development. As a result, they have few role models who can serve as mentors and sponsors.

Mentors, sponsors, and networks all provide support for career advancement. The mentor is someone who can be trusted to provide sage advice and counsel because he or she is skilled in a given career field, is knowledgeable about the culture of the organization, and is someone with whom the employee feels comfortable.

A sponsor is directly involved in advancing an employee's career. He or she actively positions a specific individual for recognition, opportunities, and promotions. Without sponsorship, an individual may be overlooked for promotion, regardless of competence and performance.

Networks are a source of contacts with individuals who can provide advice, career information, and moral support, and open doors to new opportunities. Networks provide a means for personal and professional growth. SCS has no uniform policy on mentors, sponsors, and networks.

Recommendations:
Develop networks that benefit all employees. Provide mentors and sponsors for all new employees. Showcase significant contributions of diverse cultural groups within the work force.



Spreading the Word

In SCS, the written word has been the primary means of communication. Most of this information has been in the form of memos, advisories, directories, handbooks, publications, and manuals. Written communications operate in only one direction and may not reflect the sensitivity, timeliness, or importance of the message.

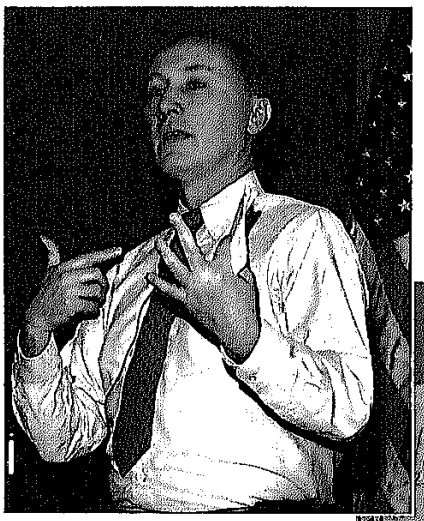
When information must pass through formal channels it can become distorted, filtered, misinterpreted, and even lost. Informal channels such as the grapevine can be more accurate and timely. However, individuals not connected to the grapevine may miss information vital to their careers.

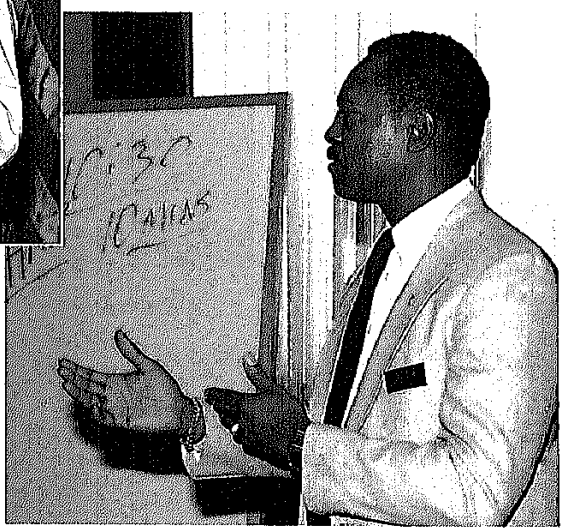
Verbal communications increase understanding and improve morale. Communicating directly with one another enhances job effectiveness and reduces isolation. Frequent all-employee meetings can provide a regular exchange of information, reaffirm priorities, and spawn new ideas.

Training methods should take into account different learning styles and cultural attributes. Replacing standardized modules with face-to-face discussions permits two-way communication that can address real problems.

By eliminating communication barriers, SCS can improve service to clients. Innovative communications and follow-up will help ensure that the information is fully understood.

Recommendations:
Use satellite hookups and other electronic media to link people throughout the agency. Hold demonstrations, public meetings, and all-employee meetings to communicate available programs and services. Develop appropriate information and methods to communicate with culturally diverse groups.





Expanding Service

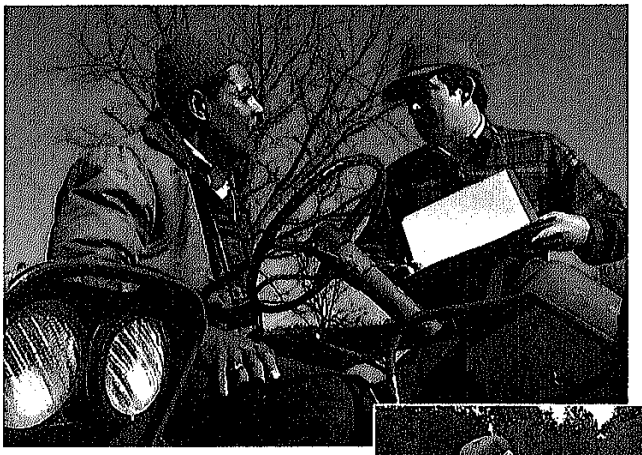
Traditionally, SCS provided assistance to those who were ready, willing, and able to practice and apply conservation. Technical information was presented in a form that made it difficult for culturally diverse groups to understand. Channels and methods used to supply information often did not reach various groups who needed to know about farm programs and services.

Soil and water conservation partners set local priorities which may inadvertently have left out non-traditional clientele, such as minority and limited resource farmers, garden clubs, and urban audiences.

A wide variety of clients need information tailored to their specific needs. SCS needs to be able to help today's farmers and ranchers make the most efficient use of their land in order to remain competitive in the marketplace. The farm bills of 1985 and 1990 have vastly increased SCS's clientele, who need information to remain eligible for programs. SCS also needs to be able to communicate with the increasing number of people who are experimenting with innovative and non-traditional farming methods.

All farmers and ranchers must have full access to information and programs. Employees need to be able to relate to diverse groups, promote a sense of trust, and reach every segment of the population. The agency needs a diverse work force which can provide useful information and assistance to clients, who are also diverse in their culture and methods of farming.

Recommendations:
Coordinate efforts at all levels of the organization to deliver information on practical, innovative, and low-initial-cost conservation practices to minorities, limited resource farmers, and others. Staff offices with a diverse work force that is trained in technology transfer. Train employees on responsibilities and methods for program delivery and outreach to culturally diverse groups.



Achieving the Goal

SCS, like many agencies in USDA, does not have a multi-culturally diverse work force at all levels. Traditionally, SCS has been dominated by individuals with agricultural or technical backgrounds. Until recently, management's vision for achieving agency objectives has been driven by programs and economics. Most SCS policies and procedures deal with technical aspects of the job rather than managing and developing human resources.

If SCS is to reap the benefits of work force diversity, employees need to understand and support the concept. Top management must clearly communicate the benefits of diversity. They also need to provide resources to launch special initiatives that have shown positive results in studies, demonstrations, and pilot projects (*e.g.*, training, upward mobility, etc.).

All employees have a role in creating an environment that values multi-cultural differences. It is important that performance appraisals clearly identify actions which can contribute to work force diversity. Managers need to be held accountable for achieving work force diversity, using the tools available. Results should be measurable and accomplishments rewarded.

Recommendations:
Use the appraisal system to assess employee accomplishments, giving equal weight to technical and human resource elements. Develop a work force diversity award. Establish a council to evaluate progress and apprise management of the agency's performance. Include diverse representation on task forces and standing committees.

Task Force Recommendations

Based on the Work Force Diversity Conference and follow-up activities, the Task Force proposes the following recommendations for consideration:

1. Leadership

The Task Force has observed the lack of centralized leadership in following through with an implementation strategy regarding work force diversity. Under current conditions, SCS's long term capacity to diversify its work force appears unlikely. Even the Task Force's efforts have been frustrated by fragmented direction and a lack of focus within the agency. The effects of work force diversity reach deeply into the organization, touching every function and process. Organizationally, there is confusion as to where work force diversity belongs in the directives system and in correspondence. Sometimes it is treated as:

- Equal Opportunity—which it is not,
- Personnel—which it is not,
- a program—which it is not, and
- a strategic initiative—which may best describe its characteristics. Implementation must begin with centralized leadership.

The task force recommends that responsibility for leadership, policy development, and implementation be formally established and assigned to the highest level within SCS. A single individual should be assigned the function of implementing this multi-faceted strategic initiative.

2. Formal Training and Workshops

The Task Force has observed a serious lag in incorporating work force diversity concepts into formal training and workshops. Each time a meeting is held and diversity is ignored, the subtle implication is that "business as usual" prevails. Three steps that may be taken with minimal effort are to:

- include diversity and its importance to the conservation effort in all training and presentations;
- assure that the instructor cadre reflects the diversity of the audiences; and
- assure that the participants reflect the diversity of the multi-cultural work force.

The task force recommends that the Employee Development Staff evaluate the practices discussed above and immediately develop corrective strategies.

3. Management Support

Many SCS employees feel that managers perceive work force diversity as just the latest fad which, if given enough time, will self-destruct. Employees feel that management is not committed. The Task Force believes that there is no stronger method of demonstrating commitment than through actions and changes in behavior, beginning at the very top. In the corporate sector, management's support for work force diversity in the work place has been absolutely essential to its success.

Diversity training for top managers needs to be developed. The training should emphasize understanding one's own biases and assumptions about others, managing and motivating diverse cultures, listening skills, problem solving, and counseling. After the training, participants should be able to communicate and promote the need for and the benefits of diversity.

The Task Force recommends that diversity training begin with managers and then be carried out throughout SCS.

4. Recognition

The task force has observed a number of states initiating work force diversity efforts with limited information, training, and leadership. Some of these efforts will pay big dividends in the future. It is important that these efforts be recognized and encouraged.

The Task Force recommends that exemplary activities and programs be encouraged and publicized. Appropriate recognition should be made through the current awards programs.

5. Networks

It is important to encourage group networking along and across cultural lines. If used properly, networks can provide managers and supervisors valuable insight into problems and concerns in the work place. The groups provide needed support systems to its participants. As the work place becomes more diverse, networks should be viewed as organizational assets.

The Task Force recommends that networking groups be supported and encouraged as a source of suggestions and innovative ideas.

Appendices

A Highlights of Recommendations by Concern

B Work Group Summary Reports

C Work Force Diversity Conference Evaluation

D Framework Plan for Action

E Task Force Membership

Appendix A

Highlights of Recommendations by Concern

Responding to Change (Work Environment)

- Implement the flexible workplace nationwide.
- Establish a Cultural Diversity Resource Specialist within SCS.
- Consider diversity of communities, dual career couples, spousal placement and housing when placing new hires and transferring current employees.
- Encourage employee networks.

Broadening the Base (Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement)

- Create an SCS ROTC organization at colleges and universities.
- Explain mobility requirements to all employees seeking advancement.
- Evaluate and use information from exit interviews to help increase retention rates.
- Recruit and hire at higher grade levels.
- Expand opportunities for job-sharing.
- Create a competitive salary/benefits package.
- Identify the non-farm traditional positions where minority pools are higher; for example: administration, budget, finance, computer, contracting, and procurement.

Increasing Opportunities (Qualification, Classification, and Selection Process)

- Review X-118 requirements and consider broadening.
- Broaden the position classification for DCs.
- Create skills pools for all disciplines.
- KSAs are perceived as a barrier to some groups. Train employees to respond to KSAs. Utilize generic vacancy announcements. Investigate and eliminate potential barriers to recruitment, hiring, and career advancement.
- Provide a clear understanding of affirmative employment.
- Incorporate local culture and community profile information in vacancy announcements and relocation packages.
- Provide expenses for relocating new hires to remove the cost barrier.
- Expand USDA and SCS liaison positions and their roles in recruitment and other needed areas.
- Refer all qualified candidates to selecting officials.
- Assure diversity on rating panels when required.
- Create pools for targeted positions.

Valuing Diversity (Training and Development)

- Provide cultural awareness, cultural diversity, and sensitivity training to all employees, beginning with top management and human resource management specialists.
- Add cultural awareness to management and orientation courses.
- Recommend cultural awareness be added to college curricula.
- Develop videos on understanding and working with all cultures (adapt to meet local needs).
- Detail employees to areas with diverse cultures.
- Educate managers on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) hiring authorities.
- Train all Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) to be recruiters and career counselors.
- Make training in language available to employees.
- Provide opportunities for a nationwide leadership development program.
- Train human resources and equal opportunity (EO) personnel to recruit women and minorities.
- Expand Civil Rights training to include social skills, awareness, and identification of multi-cultural clientele.
- Provide training on setting priorities and assuring that all customers are serviced equally.
- Expand SCS USDA Graduate School in Public Administration to institutions of the employee's choice.

Building Support (Mentors, Sponsors, and Networks)

- Develop mentor programs.
- There is a lack of exposure of women and minority role models to employees.
- Provide a sponsor for each new employee.
- Develop support networks for women and minorities.

Spreading the Word (Communication and Information)

- Improve communications on work force diversity to National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), district boards, associations, and state committees.
- Provide information on employment and work force projections to all employees.
- Distinguish work force diversity from Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and affirmative action as a separate program to eliminate confusion and misconceptions.
- Promote the benefits of a diverse work force.
- Utilize successful limited resource farmers at field days, conferences and public meetings to communicate available programs and benefits.
- Encourage the use of a brlefing paper of local cultural demographics, customs, and unique situations for new employees and transfers.
- Develop a national recruitment, information, and education program, which would be printed in English and Spanish, that explains SCS's career opportunities, programs, and services.

Expanding Service (Program Delivery and Outreach)

- Develop innovative, low-cost conservation practices.
- Transfer technology of innovations from state to state.
- Develop informational and educational material in order to help levels and insure representation.
- Hold outreach efforts to explain SCS programs and services in areas that are accessible to all cultures.
- Inform and educate the general public and recipient groups on the values of work force diversity.
- Ensure that SCS's, FmHA's, and ASCS's limited resource and low-income farmers who are receiving services and benefits are cross-referenced.

Achieving the Goal (Commitment, Accountability, and Recognition)

- Request for accountability for work force diversity and commitment.
- Provide assistance to employees wishing advanced degrees.
- Managers need to make a dollar commitment to upward mobility.
- Develop an award for diversity accomplishments.
- Establish a council to evaluate progress on work force diversity.
- Make selecting officials accountable for work force diversity.
- Employees need to be held accountable and recognized for their actions or lack of actions.
- Include representation from diverse groups on task forces and standing committees.

Appendix B

Work Group Summary Report

Work Force Diversity Conference
Sparks, Nevada
November 26-29, 1990

Conference participants representing National Headquarters, the National Technical Centers, the Caribbean area, the Pacific Basin, and the 50 states were assigned to one of 18 work groups. A facilitator and recorder were assigned to each group. Six reporters were asked to summarize the issues and recommendations and to present them to the General Conference.

Each work group discussed three of the nine objectives related to USDA's "Framework for Change." These nine objectives were:

Objective A— Understanding the cultural aspects of work force diversity by managers, supervisors, and employees.

Objective B— Achieving a diverse work force in SCS (entry level).

Objective C— Strengthening communication systems to better educate managers, employees, and districts in EEO and work force diversity at all levels.

Objective D— Achieving fairness in the delivery of SCS programs and services.

Objective E— Accountability for work force diversity.

Objective F— Achieving a diverse work force in SCS (mid-level).

Objective G— Strengthening communication systems to better educate managers, employees, and districts in Civil Rights and work force diversity at all levels.

Objective H— Acquiring skills, attitudes, and tools (financial, time, human resources) to meet the challenge of achieving a diverse work force.

Objective I— Achieving a diverse work force in SCS (senior level).

The following report summarizes the most commonly occurring issues and recommendations for each objective. This is a working document to provide an account of issues and recommendations.

Objective A: Understanding the Cultural Aspects of Work Force Diversity by Managers, Supervisors, and Employees

Cultural differences exist that can be a barrier to recruitment.

Recommendations:

- Educate and train all employees to value cultural differences.
- Identify role models to assist in recruiting efforts.
- Include cultural awareness training in employee orientation.
- Incorporate a description of cultural diversity of duty stations into Vacancy Announcements.
- Review X-118 requirements and broaden where possible.
- Encourage colleges and universities to include cultural awareness in curricula.
- Provide information on employment and work force projections to all employees.

Cultural barriers exist within SCS that can affect internal communication.

Recommendations:

- Train SCS employees on different cultures using workshops and media materials.
- Encourage employees and managers to share cultural differences by communicating openly with one another.

Cultural barriers affect our assistance to some of the public.

Recommendations:

- Avoid stereotyping people.
- Treat people as individuals and respect their differences.
- Use qualified consultants to provide cultural diversity training to SCS staff at all levels.
- Identify various cultures working together at field office level.
- Establish a Cultural Diversity Resource Specialist at each NTC to provide cultural diversity training to SCS staff on understanding cultures (clients).

A lack of understanding of cultural diversity affects working relationships and productivity.

Recommendations:

- Develop and provide to all states a cultural sensitivity training module to be used over a 1-2 year period.
- Include cultural sensitivity training in New Employee Orientation and management courses.
- Provide opportunities for gaining awareness of cultural diversity through personnel details, training sessions, diversity on task forces and international assignments, and standing committees at NHQ, NTC, and state levels.
- Include cultural diversity sensitivity/awareness training in Employee Development Plans and Performance Appraisals.
- Require yearly training in cultural awareness/sensitivity.
- Emphasize work force diversity training to districts and NACD.
- Recognize the cultural diversity that exists among White Anglo-Saxon Protestant co-workers.
- Develop a national plan for work force diversity and provide it to states for implementation.
- Include work force diversity in the EEO/CR performance element.

- Expand the role of the Equal Opportunity Advisory Committees.
- Develop training modules on understanding and working with all cultures. Adapt to meet local needs.
- Identify all cultures at the field office level that SCS serves.

There is a fear of cultural diversity.

Recommendations:

- Provide accurate, timely information that will reduce the fear of the unknown.
- Provide information on employment projections and the need to maintain work force skill levels within a diverse work force.
- Recognize language barriers that exist among employees and customers; provide training to eliminate these barriers.
- Recognize cultures and subcultures in all groups.
- Don't treat minorities or others differently, and don't over-respond to successes and failures.
- Provide employees with more than statistics. Include facts on work force diversity that are non-threatening to white males.

There is a need for strong national leadership to emphasize cultural diversity awareness/ sensitivity.

Recommendation:

- Develop a broad statement on diversity and issue it nationwide.

There is a lack of time and management support to achieve an understanding of Work Force Diversity.

Recommendations:

- Good management takes time; allow time for managers to achieve work force diversity.
- Don't allow the lack of time to serve as an excuse for not achieving work force diversity.
- Include work force diversity in EEO/CR performance element.

Objectives B, F, I: Achieving a Diverse Work Force in SCS

Objective B	at the entry level	GS 8 and below
Objective F	at the mid-level	GS 9-12
Objective I	at the senior level	GS 13-15, SES

Work Force Diversity itself is the first issue. It prompted this statement in one session:

"Servicewide, we cannot prevent this agency from diversifying, even if we want to. The demographics are dictating diversity." As accurate as that statement may be, the work force diversity issue provoked discussions about:

- commitment to diversity;
- implementation of diversification;
- taking responsibility for this change;
- acquiring skills to succeed in this effort.

Recommendations:

- Develop an award for diversity accomplishments and establish a council to evaluate progress.
- Make selecting officials accountable for work force diversity.

Skills for success with Work Force Diversity is the second issue.

To be successful in achieving work force diversity will require developing skills which include:

- sensitivity to cultures;
- dealing with barriers;
- providing support for employees.

Recommendations:

- Use National Finance Center (NFC) statistics to discover SCS diversification needs on a national or regional basis. Create a national strategy and address diversification regionally or nationally. It is not intended to remove the responsibility from state conservationists.
- Give training to SCS employees on understanding diversity in the work force.
- Implement the recommendations from Work Force 2000.
- Have each person identify his or her own benefits of work force diversity.

Recruitment is an issue at all three levels.

At entry level: Co-op students and summer hires—too many times efforts disappoint SCS managers when the minority or woman recruit leaves SCS before completing student training or Co-Op Ed assignments, or shortly after becoming a GS-5/7 full time employee. Problems occur because the recruit was not "prepared" properly or had unrealistic expectations.

At mid-level: preparing people who are "ready, willing, and able."

At senior level: recruitment from outside SCS.

There is a need to increase the effectiveness of USDA liaisons.

Need to expand the role of USDA liaisons in recruiting. (Presently, they may be more responsive to the agency that they were formerly attached to and limited to the state where the school is located.)

Recommendations:

- Create SCS's own ROTC; the Soil Conservation Training Corps; a scholarship program.
- Provide recruitment and relocation bonuses for new hires.
- Develop a realistic long-range (5 years) staffing plan and communicate the plan to all employees.
- To increase recruiting effectiveness by USDA liaisons, these people need to be well-known among University faculty, staffs, and students. University personnel need to recognize them as the main link for employment in USDA agencies. Liaisons also need to be familiar with the career goals and location preference of undergraduates. This can be accomplished because enrollment of eligible students is not excessive. Further, liaisons need to have some idea of the suitability of students for the various agencies.
- Liaisons need to be accepted by employing officials as the primary contact for recruitment at 1890 schools. In SCS, liaisons need a direct link to the Employment Branch as opposed to the personnel officer in the state where they are located. Liaisons need to be kept abreast of employment opportunities within the agency and through the State's Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP), and Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Plan (FEORP). This will allow them to refer applicants to locations of their choice as vacancies occur.
- Recruit and hire at higher grade levels.
- Target other schools, not only 1890 schools, that educate minorities.
- Make better use of hiring authorities and job restructuring.
- Advertise more interdisciplinary positions.
- Recruit and hire candidates with degrees in administrative fields.
- Educate managers on Office of Personnel Management authorities.
- Drop the soils requirements for soil conservationists, or call them resource conservationists.
- Use aggressive recruitment methods above grammar school.
- Create a reserve of funds for states to use for hiring when individuals from underrepresented groups are located.

More efforts are needed aimed at retention.

Concerns related to retention include:

- an expanded role in promoting retention of student trainees and Co-Op Ed trainees (USDA liaisons should be the SCS advisor for all trainees from the school);
- opportunities within SCS;
- mobility requirements;
- dual career couples;
- reliance on the traditional career path;
- loss of some very capable, experienced employees at middle and senior levels—capable of top leadership;
- increased job-sharing opportunities to provide a trained labor force to be called upon when needed;
- use of exit interviews;
- competitive salary/benefits package.

Recommendations:

- Student trainees from 1890 schools: SCS supervisors should be required to submit periodic evaluations to USDA liaisons of employee progress. Where possible, liaisons should visit trainees during the summer to evaluate progress. They should be able to track progress of trainees placed in locations that have a low retention rate. USDA liaisons should conduct orientation sessions for new trainees so that the students will know what to expect.
- Broaden our hiring and position classification horizons. All employees don't need to be soil conservationists. A District Conservationist could be a biologist, an engineer, or even an economist.
- Be flexible with qualification standards for experienced employees.
- Adopt a policy that allows flexibility related to non-career paths.

There is concern about the process of applying for positions.

Many employees, including minorities and women do not have information about opportunities in other states. Illinois and Florida cooperate on exchanging information about vacancies.

Recommendation:

- Create a system—a skills pool—for all disciplines (soil conservationists, DCs, ACs, biologists, agronomists, range conservationists, engineers) so employees can indicate interest in selected states and receive job announcements from those states.

KSAs (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities) have been acknowledged as a hindrance to certain cultural groups.

Speaker Santiago Rodriguez said, "Some cultures teach people not to blow their own horns, not to do 'self-selling' and not to talk about their abilities and achievements."

Recommendations:

- Look at the KSAs to see how they could inhibit some cultures and see if there is a need to change the format and structure.
- Train people on how to respond to KSAs.

There are barriers in the selection process.

Barriers in the selection process include:

- time in grade;
- good-old-boy network;
- job descriptions written for a specific person;
- no diversity on applicant panel;
- narrow membership of ratings panel—no diversity at all;
- telephone vs personal interviews, or no interview at all;
- lack of exposure of candidates;
- relocation costs;
- attitudes of selecting officials regarding work force diversity;
- white male majority at the senior level as selecting officials;
- going through the hoops of the traditional career paths.

Recommendations:

- Help selecting officials develop a positive attitude toward work force diversity.
- Assure there is diverse representation on rating panels.
- Revise the policy that says a selecting official needs to look at outside sources only if there are fewer than three qualified candidates.
- Give the selecting official all the qualified applicants instead of screening them to forward only 10 applications.
- Provide information to selecting officials on mobility requirements; review upgrades without mobility.
- Educate work force on procedures for out-of-state use of skills files and other merit promotion procedures.
- Reduce restrictions to select from panel if diversity is not represented.
- Create pools for targeted positions.
- Secure direct-hire authority for positions other than civil and agricultural engineers.

There are other concerns about the selection process.

- There are concerns about preferential treatment.
- Selecting officials are concerned about being "compelled" to hire underrepresented candidates.
- There is a concern of backlash by white males who feel they are not being considered fairly for promotions.
- There is a concern about lack of potential candidates for a diverse work force.

Recommendations:

- Clearly explain and communicate the selection and recruitment process with respect to work force diversity to all employees.
- Provide a clear understanding of affirmative employment plans at the national, state, and local levels.
- Encourage frank and open communications between employees and supervisors.
- Encourage commitment and support from all levels of SCS.

Training is a concern.

Training was also discussed by groups probing work force diversity at entry, mid, and senior levels.

- Training leaders need to be sensitive to employees' varied backgrounds.
- Cultural awareness training and workshops are needed for senior managers.
- A problem exists with trainers who won't train women and minorities, or shortcut their training compared with training they give to white males.

Recommendations:

- Relieve the fear of having to approach minorities.
- Develop alternative ways of getting training.
- Develop a more effective training manual.
- Use a diverse group to evaluate the new management training series.
- Managers should make a dollar commitment to upward mobility.
- Provide assistance to employees wishing upward mobility.
- Provide better training to new supervisors.

- Provide better training to new hires at field level.
- Train all Special Emphasis Program Managers/EEO personnel to be career counselors.
- Provide opportunity for details.
- Agency should develop bilingual training for employees in multi-lingual areas.
- Provide cross-training to SCS employees.
- Provide nationwide leadership development program to be administered at regional level.
- Train personnel specialists to recruit women and minorities from different cultures.

There is a need to consider employees' environment: physical, social, professional.

Concerns related to the work environment include:

- Support for minority and women employees is a necessary condition for achievement of work force diversity. The new minority employee sent to a county where no minorities live is placed in a very unfamiliar situation. That employee needs support.
- It is penny-wise and pound foolish to work hard at recruitment, then fail to retain employees because of lack of support. Support is necessary also for the supervisor who is uncomfortable working with a woman or minority subordinate.
- Implement flexible workplace nationwide.
- Publicize state's responses to dual career families.

Recommendations:

- Provide a sponsor for each new employee who will provide information on housing, spousal placement, and special needs.
- Provide a mentor program and career counseling.
- Develop a support network for females and minorities. Perhaps several networks can be established:
  - —networks for DCs; for ACs;
  - —the network that serves as a "friendly ear" to bend in time of need;
  - —give new employees information about their new location—culture of area, size of town, major industries, rental/purchase housing options, etc.;
  - —provide cultural awareness training to all employees;
  - —introduce employees and family to the new community;
  - —include community profile in vacancy announcement and relocation package.
- Implement flexible workplace nationwide.
- Publicize state's responses to dual career families.

Better communication is needed.

"Communication" is the two-way exchange of ideas between colleagues and with supervisors and staffs.

Recommendations:

- Communicate with applicants so that expectations are realistic.
- Give "soft skill" training across cultural lines.
- Broaden two-way communication to enhance effectiveness.
- Communicate demographics so employees understand their work environment and diversity.
- Create a national newsletter on employee issues such as work force diversity and tell how states are handling the issues.
- Raise the visibility of SCS so we can accomplish work force diversity.

Objectives C and G: Strengthening of Communication Systems

Objective C: Strengthening of communication systems to better educate managers, employees, and districts in EEO and Work Force Diversity at all levels.

Objective G: Strengthening of communication systems to better educate managers, employees, and districts in Civil Rights and Work Force Diversity at all levels.

EO, Civil Rights, and Work Force Diversity are not clearly understood by SCS employees. There seems to be a varied message as to meaning.

"Clarify the message" and "communicate it to all employees." It is essential that Work Force Diversity be fully understood by all employees and that there be uniformity of interpretation.

Recommendations:

- Clearly define objectives and benefits of work force diversity and communicate them to all employees.
- Emphasize the positive impacts of work force diversity.
- Provide sensitivity and awareness training for all employees in SCS.
- Develop videos along with other techniques for special emphasis program managers to use at DC, AC, and state staff meetings. Train all SCS employees, not just select groups.
- Incorporate cultural diversity in core training and management training.
- Provide support systems and education on multi-cultural situations.
- Educate managers to accommodate people with different needs (holidays, celebrations, events, etc.).
- Distinguish work force diversity from EEO and affirmative action as a separate program to eliminate confusion and misconceptions.

Need to overcome communication barriers; find better ways to use existing communication systems; and develop and use innovative communication methods.

Failure to communicate honestly about one's feelings, attitudes and concerns (both personal and professional) was brought up as a significant barrier to successful implementation of work force diversity. We need improved communication techniques to reach all customers (not reaching clientele in all areas). How do we get feedback to assure that we are communicating?

Recommendations:

- That the Chief send proceedings of the Work Force Diversity Conference to all employees—including a clear statement of what work force diversity is and what SCS is doing to achieve successful implementation.
- Have NHQ, NTCs, and states develop a strategic plan for communicating and implementing work force diversity. This would include:
  - —conference at the state level;
  - —defining communications systems to be used;
  - —a system to get feedback on progress;
  - —a commitment of resources;
  - —an evaluation of effectiveness.
- Incorporate work force diversity into Total Quality Management to meet customer needs and expectations.
- Develop videos and brochures on diversity.

- Encourage self-study. Develop information and understanding on diverse cultural backgrounds and values, and communicate to employees as appropriate.
- Issue a policy to encourage networking on work force diversity.
- Utilize the volunteer program.
- Encourage open and frank communications among SCS employees at all levels.
- Public Affairs Specialists need to be trained. Releases do not tell the true story. Have Special Emphasis Program Managers review materials released on diversity.

There is a lack of understanding by SWCDs of SCS roles and responsibilities in CR, EEO, and Work Force Diversity, and help to meet these responsibilities.

Employees do not feel comfortable discussing diversity and board membership with SWCDs.

There is a concern that SWCD Boards, Councils and Watershed Steering Committees tend to be predominantly white male, and in many instances do not reflect the cultural diversity of the community.

There is concern that disparity in SWCD Boards, Councils, and Watershed Steering Committee make-up does not truly represent the population.

Recommendations:

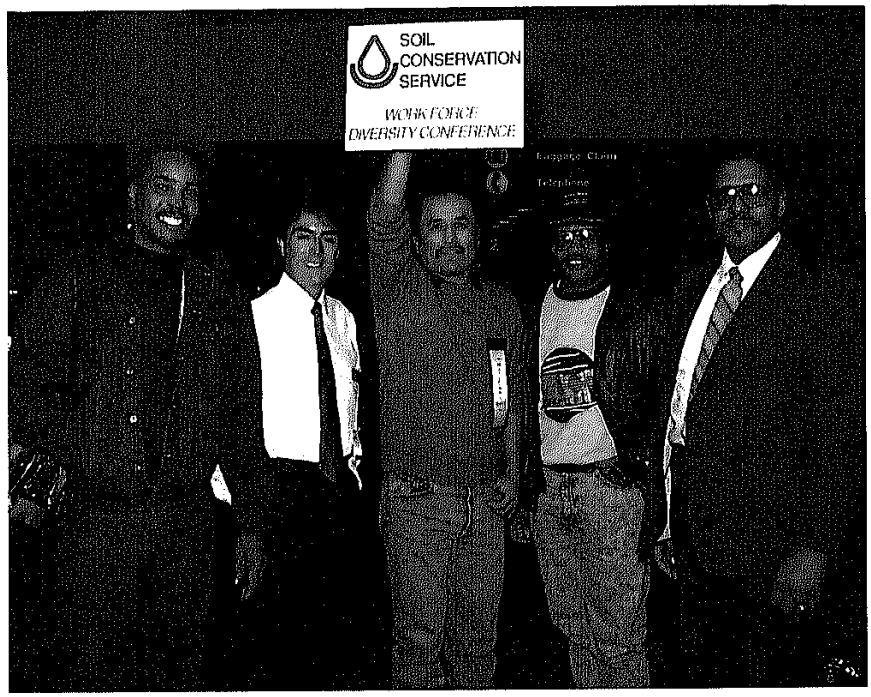
- Continue to emphasize the Chief's Action Plan with regard to representation on District Boards at all levels of management.
- Have NHQ work with NACD at the national level to assist them in getting information out to SWCDs. (Chief needs to address work force diversity in his speech at the NACD annual meeting in February 1991.)
- Include videos for use at NACD leadership conferences.
- State Conservationists should take the lead in meeting with state association leaders to emphasize the importance of developing long-range plans that reflect cultural diversity and responsibilities.
- State Conservationists need to work with state associations and state agencies to assist them in getting information to SWCDs and the public.
- State Conservationists should encourage and provide support to the state association in developing information and education material on how to become a District Board member and the responsibilities of the position.
- District Conservationists should take the lead in meeting with local district leaders to emphasize the importance of developing long-range plans that reflect cultural diversity and responsibilities.
- Train DCs and field office staff on working with SWCDs on work force diversity. Invite SWCD boards and employees to participate in training.
- Reflect work force diversity in SWCD Memorandums of Understanding.
- Invite potential board members to attend a board meeting.
- Encourage use of associate board members.
- Develop a "How-To" brochure on becoming a district board member (elected, appointed, etc.).
- Local Watershed Steering Committees should reflect the diversity of the population benefitting from the projects.

There is a lack of sensitivity to cultural diversity and its values and impacts on program delivery.

We do not seem to be able to reach beyond our traditional clientele. Our organizational culture may be a barrier to effective communications. Other concerns include: stereotyping people, being indifferent to their uniqueness, and a lack of sensitivity.

Recommendations:

- Identify groups and sub-cultures which require non-traditional outreach and service groups.
- Recognize local and regional cultural diversity and develop innovative methods for program delivery.
- Encourage respect for and knowledge of cultural differences.
- Help the work force recognize the clientele which lacks trust in SCS/SWCD programs and assist employees with skills and procedures to develop a trust.
- Redefine SCS mission statement to reflect cultural diversity.
- Reward innovative approaches—use awards system.
- Inform and educate the general public and recipient groups on the values of a diverse work force.
- Show how a diverse work force would be the best to have in the future.



Objective D: Achievement of Fairness in the Delivery of SCS Programs and Services

SCS needs to identify and develop low-cost conservation practices that will meet our customers' needs.

Recommendations:

- Coordinate at all levels of multi-agency efforts (related to program delivery) through Food and Agriculture Councils. Increase emphasis on practical, innovative, and low-cost practices.
- Recognize individuals with awards or other incentives who have developed and promoted practical, innovative, low-cost practices.
- As innovative, low-cost technology is developed, have each state/area implement a technology transfer system.
- Utilize neighbor-to-neighbor concept in promoting innovative, low-cost practices.
- Use successful limited resource farmers at field days and public meetings to communicate available programs to limited resource farmers.
- Cost-share programs, standards and specifications should take into account the client's cultural background and ability to pay.

There is a need to balance workload demands with available resources so outreach efforts can be effective.

Recommendations:

- Utilize neighbor-to-neighbor concept in getting conservation on the land.
- Use Food Security Act as a tool in servicing the needs of groups that have not traditionally utilized our service.
- Have managers instill in their employees that EO is an integral part of all SCS functions and is not to be viewed as a separate function.
- Modify the progress reporting system to include reporting of assistance provided to joint ownership and joint decision-makers.
- Conduct outreach efforts to explain SCS programs in areas that are accessible by all cultures.
- Communicate to all employees that there are methods other than the national reporting system for gathering data.
- Use Total Quality Management techniques in dealing with our customers. Find customer needs rather than one need to service.
- Develop national information and education program that explains SCS programs and services available. Provide materials in English and Spanish.

There is a need to recruit, train, and retrain a multi-cultural work force.

Recommendations:

- Distribute the "Valuing Diversity" videotapes (7) to each state.
- Distribute "Putting It Together" slide-tape set to each state.
- Provide all employees with cultural awareness training from outside consultants who are sensitive to cultural differences.
- Include cultural awareness training as a part of orientation training.
- Develop high-profile techniques that will identify SCS as an agency whose success will be determined by its culturally diverse work force.
- Expand Civil Rights to include social skills, awareness, and identification of multi-cultural clientele.

Objective E: Accountability for Work Force Diversity

Who will be held accountable for implementing Work Force Diversity?

Group consensus is that *everyone* in SCS is responsible for helping implement work force diversity. Therefore, all employees will be accountable through the SCS line and staff organizational structure.

Recommendations:

- *Training:* Training is needed to make employees aware that work force diversity is more than the civil rights and equal employment policy requirements that have been issued by SCS.
- Participants have very strong ideas as to who should be held accountable for work force diversity. Everyone seemed to understand the line and staff organization and how it works. They believe that the heads of the agencies should be accountable and the responsibility should be shared throughout all levels.
- The group agreed some method should be implemented to measure and track the progress of work force diversity. This could be accomplished by recommending/appointing someone to head the work force diversity effort and giving that person the power to make sure every effort is used to accomplish our mission.
- *Attitude:* Each employee must be challenged to evaluate his or her current attitude concerning work force diversity and to modify behavior patterns to meet his or her level of accountability. This must be done throughout the agency, top to bottom.

Define work force diversity in language all employees can understand.

Need to identify difference between Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity requirements when compared to work force diversity.

Discussion of work force diversity resulted in the following definition: "A multicultural workplace is one in which all people are sensitive to individual differences and attitudes and in which these differences are valued and respected."

Recommendation:

None

There is a need for clear, strong leadership from the top on work force diversity goals and commitment.

Management's expectations of the rank-and-file are not clearly communicated. Are "numbers" what is important in measuring accountability? Field employees cannot be held accountable because they have no control over hiring, yet there is a feeling that they are seen as somehow responsible for SCS's hiring record.

Recommendations:

- Chief should issue policy defining our commitment and accountability measures to be imposed throughout the agency.
- Accountability guidelines need to be developed at the national level.
- Develop and provide training to ensure that everyone in SCS has work force diversity responsibilities and clearly specify each employee's responsibility in various areas (general commitment, recruitment, hiring, retention, delivery of services).

Implementation strategies are needed at each level (NHQ, NTC, State, etc.).

Recommendation:

- Each state, NTC, etc., should be responsible for the development of an implementation strategy utilizing all levels of the organization through a participatory process.

How do we get employees to accept accountability?

Recommendations:

- Emphasize the fact that management can benefit from work force diversity by recognizing that you can get the same commitment, quality, and quantity of performance from a heterogeneous work force that you get from a homogeneous one.
- Establish communications on work force diversity to all employees by use of newsletters, bulletins.

People need to be told they are accountable and be judged on their performance.

Recommendations:

- Each individual in the work force needs to know what the work force diversity requirements are at his or her level.
- A sense of commitment needs to be exhibited by those who supervise others.
- Supervisors should be held accountable for opportunities to diversify the work force.
- Establish a baseline for each management area, based on present conditions.
- Monitor changes and actions quarterly.

Should a person be excused from accountability for a lack of candidates?

The question of whether a person should be excused from accountability because candidates are not available in his or her geographic recruitment area was discussed. The discussion indicated "no," because there are other factors, such as expanding the recruitment area, which can be considered.

Recommendations:

- Each individual needs to be held accountable for his/her actions.
- Excuse of resource constraints (example: funds, time, training) must not be allowed to interfere with the achievement of the SCS work force diversity.

Work force diversity needs to be built into the Performance Appraisal System.

Performance on work force diversity issues is not adequately measured and judged in the present system.

Recommendations:

- Include in national and state policy that:
  - —Work force diversity responsibilities should be included in every plan of operation.
  - —Work force diversity responsibilities should be included in Performance Appraisals.

There is a need to communicate Affirmative Employment Plans.

Affirmative Employment Plans (AEPs) are not communicated to employees who have equal opportunity responsibilities.

AEPs are not adequately coordinated with plans of operations or work force assessment ("hiring") plans.

AEPs are not used effectively to establish, track, and evaluate accountability performance.

AEPs are difficult to read and to understand.

Recommendations:

- Individuals responsible for affirmative employment plans should be trained in affirmative employment plan development, use, communication, and follow-up.
- AEP accomplishments should be used to rate employees' performance.
- SCS offices should develop affirmative employment plan "executive summaries" and send them to all employees.

Sufficient funds are needed to achieve accountability.

The lack of funds can have a direct impact on one's ability to meet his or her level of accountability.

Recommendation:

None.

SCS needs to measure progress in EO, CR elements, and in retention, recruitment and promotion of work force diversity.

Current diversity measurement methods are not adequate.

Recommendations:

- Determine whether or not the civilian labor force statistics are an accurate standard for SCS use and how the standards will be applied (i.e., national, state, or local). Persons held accountable must be informed of how these standards will be used to measure their work force diversity progress.
- Use retention rate as the measurement standard for long-term accomplishments rather than recruiting only to meet immediate needs.

PATCO groups are inadequate for group comparisons.

Civilian force statistics and Professional, Administrative, Technical, Clerical, and Other (PATCO) groups are not an adequate method for establishing baseline conditions.

Recommendation:

- Explore other methods of establishing employment group comparisons. Develop and implement a pilot program in "test states" to demonstrate these methods.

There is a need for education and training.

Recommendations:

- Develop and carry out work force diversity training for all employees.
- Include work force diversity in each employee's Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- Train all employees regarding what work force diversity is and what is expected.
- Provide training that is based on the idea "Lead us, give us the vision, and trust us. Once we live the vision, remove the club."
- Provide training to clarify to all employees that they have a responsibility for the success, retention and development of new employees with difference.
- Provide sensitivity training to all employees.
- Training should be supported with the funds that are needed to address recruitment.
- Provide training to inform employees of methods in:
  - —locating eligible individuals who are qualified in areas of SCS's needs;
  - —rewarding employees whose accomplishments are noteworthy;
  - —recognizing that people are not inferior just because they are different.

There is a need to change some existing policies and procedures.

Recommendations:

- Pay for relocating new hires to first duty assignment; assist employees in locating jobs for their spouses.
- Develop new, innovative approaches to recruitment.

There is a lack of concern for retention.

Present accountability concentrates on hiring with no concern for retention.

Recommendations:

- Improve system for evaluating why people are leaving SCS.
- Use the data to improve retention rates.

Objective H: What Skills, Attitudes, and Tools (Financial, Time, and Human Resources) Are Required to Meet the Challenge of Achieving a Diverse Work Force?

Need to balance work force diversity with multiple priorities.

The work force, on average, may well perceive "Work Force Diversity" as another program they will have to balance with their multiple #1 priorities.

Recommendations:

- Encourage self-development.
- Tie management/cultural diversity courses to college curriculum.
- Encourage detailing rather than transfers to provide training in diversity.
- Establish a local network to identify available sources of cultural awareness training, seminars, etc.
- Develop co-op agreements with colleges and universities to provide intern training for SCS employees.
- Provide for hiring of other disciplines—sociologists, landscape architects, and political scientists—to address community planning cultural diversity demands.
- Establish a cadre of cultural diversity vendors to evaluate, train, and provide problem resolution assistance to SCS.

There is a need for cultural specialists.

Establish SCS cultural specialists to deal with regional training and more importantly, one-on-one counseling.

Recommendation:

- Develop or hire employees to handle:
  - — human relations and cultural awareness;
  - — career counseling;
  - — family care;
  - — financial counseling.

Employee proficiency models at all levels do not have standardized category on work force diversity.

Recommendations:

- Require the use of Employee Proficiency Models nationwide.
- Standardize the use of employee proficiency models to include Work Diversity concerns in all models.
- Develop a "New and Improved" training manual which incorporates and supports the major categories in the employee proficiency models with cross-referencing of skill needs and training opportunities.
- Revise proficiency models for all employees to include:
  - — human relations;
  - — cultural awareness;
  - — assessment of employee skills.

Appendix C

Work Force Diversity Conference Evaluation

The following is a summary of responses from 480 conference participants.

1. Were the overall objectives achieved?
   Yes: 336 (86%)
   No: 19 (4.9%)
   Other: 36 (9.1%)

2. Did the material/information presented
   at the conference expand your knowledge and understanding?
   Yes: 381 (97.4%)
   No: 7 (1.8%)
   No response 3 (.8%)

3. Were the breakout sessions beneficial?
   Yes: 365 (93.4%)
   No: 13 (3.3%)
   Others: 11 (2.8%)

4. What were the best features at this conference?
   1 - Speaker's sessions 137 (35%)
   2 - Breakout sessions 72 (18%)
   3 - Both 175 (44.8%)
   4 - Others 7 (1.8%)

5. How do you rate the overall conference?
   Poor: 0 (0%)
   Fair: 23 (5.9%)
   Good: 198 (50.6%)
   Excellent: 166 (42.5%)
   N/A : 1 (.2%)
   Other: 3 (.8%)

6. Please give the three most important barriers in achieving work force diversity.

   (a) Lack of positive attitude toward work force diversity:

   Intrinsic within SCS employees: This comes from prejudice, ignorance, lack of knowledge and lack of management commitment, lack of dedication, biased value system, lack of belief in work force diversity, different cultural backgrounds, fear of changes, apathy, and complacency.

   Lack of commitment from management and employees: Lack of employees' acceptance, especially managers' commitment toward work force diversity; no positive recruitment and retention processes and strategies; no strong leadership for work force diversity; supervisors lack capability to manage work force diversity; and lack of strategic plan and vision toward work force diversity (with precise definitions and goals).

   External influences: Working with traditional white-male-dominated soil and water conservation district boards.

(b) Lack of understanding, training, and program to promote work force diversity.

To SCS employees/managers: Lack of understanding work force diversity; lack of sensitivity, not recognizing cultural differences; bias toward women and minorities; SCS not assertive enough on EEO, civil rights, and work force diversity; lack of leadership commitment to work force diversity, budget, personnel ceilings, and time.

Management practices: Problems in the placement system; inadequate recruitment techniques; lack of accountability, upward mobility opportunities; not supportive enough on affirmative actions.

Employee mobility as a requirement for placement and advancement; "Good Old Boys" systems; biased rating system; job classifications too narrow; not maintaining large enough applicant pool; lack of implementation and follow-up to EEO, Civil Rights and Affirmative actions; no strategic plan to implement work force diversity.

Lack of success stories and communicating them to employees.

Lack of budget and resources, or low salaries discourage good candidates.

Retention: Business as usual, or accept status quo; fear of the unknown.

(c) Lack of qualified individuals willing to accept government positions, or minority candidates with qualified backgrounds.

7. Please recommend three strategies that SCS needs to implement to achieve work force diversity.

(a) Provide training: educate SCS employees on cultural awareness, sensitivity on cultural differences, EEO, civil rights and work force diversity; better employee counseling on work force diversity/employment opportunities at all levels; provide leadership training/communication skills training to employees.

(b) Effective communication on work force diversity: Communicate Chief's view and support toward work force diversity; provide clear definition on work force diversity, set clear leadership direction on work force diversity, communicate through all state offices, all levels of SCS offices, and SWCDs, communicate through setting good examples from SCS leadership; organize work force diversity conference in states

(c) Change policies and take actions in recruitments and work force diversity developments:

(1) Develop plans/planning: set a realistic work force diversity schedule, develop SCS (by state) framework plan on work force diversity, or long-range employment plan for SCS, or nationwide recruitment program starting from primary schools/high school levels, and go beyond ag background candidates such as environmentally conscious candidates;

Involve EEO committee members and include field staff.

(2) Implementation: set a policy goal toward work force diversity at all levels; do not use PATCO together with demographic distribution ratios as a guide;

Provide incentives to encourage work force diversity achievements;

Use details to assist on work force diversity;

Provide adequate funding/time, develop outreach and student trainee programs, emphasize employee development.

Retention—move minorities into senior management levels; development by training, upward mobility and cultural background;

Assure fairness in selection process (diverse rating panels), use full-time program managers to assist on work force diversity;

Provide opportunities for SCS employees to share individual experiences;

Promote experienced and dedicated employees;

Implement Total Quality Management and Work force 2000;

Set up interdisciplinary positions;

Develop a pool of culturally diverse, qualified candidates;

Improve federal pay scale and increase personnel ceiling;

Importance of benefits—i.e.: job sharing, flexitime, flexiplace, etc.

(3) Monitoring of progress on work force diversity: set up advisory council on work force diversity to implement and monitor progress, improve measurement of success on work force diversity.

(4) Evaluations: implement feedback system within SCS and hold top managers accountable for the implementation.

(5) Accountability

8. How should other SCS employees be notified of the results of this conference (check one item below):
   A. Now - immediately with brief newsletter with highlights (13.8%)
   B. Soon - summary report (12.5%0
   C. Soon - detailed report (6.5%)
   D. all of the above (38.6%)
   E. other (5.9%)

9. Additional comments:

"Keep work force diversity visible—but don't make it a separate issue."

"Some specialized distribution and training is essential. However, EO/CR must

be the way we do business. Incorporate even at a subliminal level, through greater attention to materials prepared by or used by SCS. SCS magazine recently had white assisting white and black assisting black photographs on facing pages—negative subliminal message."

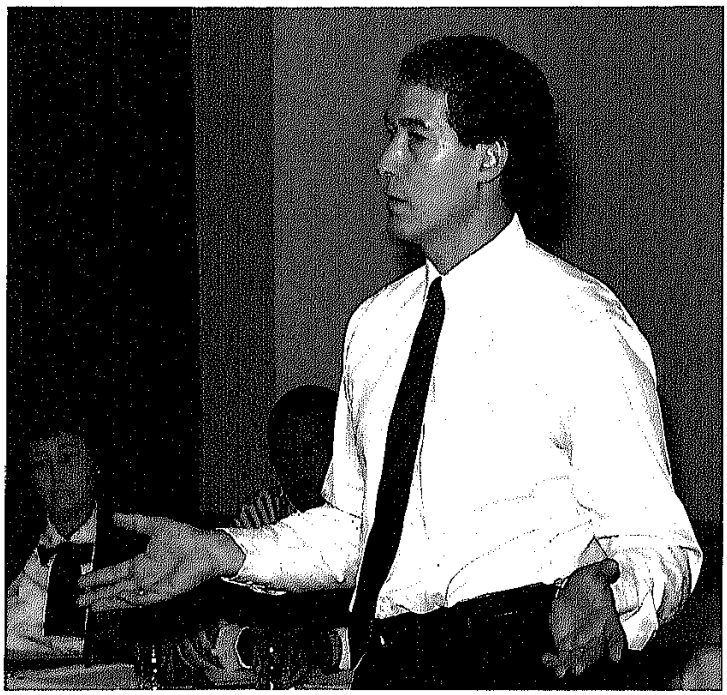
"Maybe an SCS cookbook competition could be used to show diversity and satisfy appetites. Could be a springboard to local awareness events/celebrations."

"Dr. Rodriguez was super! Use again. Do not recommend Dr. See—style was too dry—information was needed."

"Many thanks—great speakers and facilitators. Need follow-up in the states."

"I came with skepticism, left with hope."

"The quality of the conference and the dedication of the planning and local committees makes me very proud of SCS and gives me much hope for the future."



Appendix D

Framework Plan for Action

Work Force Diversity and Delivery of Programs

This framework plan was prepared following the conclusion of a highly successful Work Force Diversity Conference held in Sparks, Nevada, on November 26-29, 1990. Participants at the conference only scratched the surface of potential initiatives that might be undertaken at all levels of the Soil Conservation Service to insure that a diverse work force is achieved by the Year 2000 and that programs are delivered equitably to all persons. Some initiatives are currently underway. Others were identified as needing greater emphasis and commitment from managers throughout SCS.

An essential first step towards achieving a diverse work force is the successful implementation of SCS' Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP). As designed, the AEP is a tool that can be used to achieve a diverse work force. Issues such as retention, communication, valuing differences, etc. must be considered as well.

The Work Force Diversity Conference generated a great deal of momentum and feelings of ownership among those who attended. This kind of broad-based support is necessary to keep the initiative alive. With further resource commitment and management direction, it will be possible to continue moving towards a diverse work force by the Year 2000. Outlined below are some action items which must be implemented to realize SCS' diversity goals.

The framework plan recommendations, with the status of each as of June 15, 1991, follow:

PHASE I

Recommendation	*Status of Recommendation (6-15-91)*
1. Hold National Work Force Diversity Conference to outline issues and develop recommendations.	Conference was held in Sparks, Nevada on Nov. 26-29. Nearly 500 SCS employees from diverse background and occupational series attended and hundreds of recommendations were generated.
2. Organize Work Force Diversity Task Force (WFDT).	Task force was appointed on January 17, 1991.
3. Develop Policy Statement of Work Force Diversity, including definition and goal, and present to Chief's Policy Referral Committee.	Completed. Draft statement was reviewed by the Policy Referral Committee at their February meeting.
4. Issue Policy Statement under general manual and special fact sheet.	Completed. Fact sheet was distributed by National Bulletin number 360-1-45 dated April 4, 1991. Policy statement is completed and in printing. It will appear under part 130-GM part 405 of the general manual.
5. Update and distribute list of references and resources material to all offices.	Completed. Materials were sent out under national bulletin number 360-1-33 issued Feb. 6, 1991. Updates will be sent out periodically.
6. Provide copy of conference keynote speeches to all offices.	Completed. Speeches were distributed under memorandum, dated February 12, 1991.
7. Evaluate further uses for audio tapes of Reno speeches.	Completed. Copies of tapes were sent to each state and NTC office.
8. Issue conference highlights to all employees.	Completed. Copies of summary were distributed to all SCS employees.

PHASE II

1. Develop a video on Work Force Diversity by the Chief.	Video, including Chief's commitment, should be available in fall 1991.
2. Develop a tri-fold pocket size flyer and poster which outline components of Work Force Diversity Initiatives.	Tri-fold to be distrlbuted to all employees in the fall of 1991.
The following 16 proposals were developed by the conference reporters:	
3. Issue Conference group summary reports to all employees by mid to late July.	Completed. Copies of work group summary reports were sent to all employees.
4. Re-emphasize the implementation of recommendations from Toward Work Force 2000 conference (family care, relocation assistance, mentoring, etc.).	Completed. All action items are either completed or in near completion stage. New policies and guidelines on networking, mentoring, flexible work place, flexible work hours, career counseling are examples.

Recommendation	*Status of Recommendation (6-15-91)*
5. Evaluate feasibility of providing the slide "Putting It Together" to all states and NTCs.	Completed. National Bulletin number 260-1-22 provided instructions on how to obtain a "loaner" copy.
6. Promote WFD success stories in SCS newsletters and publications.	Ongoing. Example Sept./Oct. issue of Soil and Water Conservation magazine will contain a four-page spread on WFD.
7. Evaluate the inclusion of WFD theme on letterhead, tapes, publications, etc.	Evaluation completed. No decision made to implement.
8. Ensure that SCS top management demonstrates a commitment to achieving diversity.	Ongoing. Speeches reference this priority. The chief has designated the deputy chief for administration to lead the effort.
9. Develop a campaign to sell SCS and promote natural resource management careers.	Plan completed. Staff has been detailed to develop materials. Funding has been earmarked in FY 1991 and 1992 for implementation.
10. Identify and expand recruiting pools and establish non-traditional recruiting networks.	Completed. Information and a training session was provided to state personnel officers in April and to special emphasis managers at their meetings.
11. Incorporate cultural awareness into employee orientation training and management training.	The Employee Development Staff will make appropriate changes as courses are revised at the end of the first contract year. The course "Preparing the Work Force for the Future" has been revised and is SCS's cultural awareness sensitivity course.
12. Provide incentives and awards to employees who have demonstrated successful program delivery to multi-cultural groups.	National Equal Opportunity Committee Award criteria has been revised to reflect WFD impacts. In addition special recognition is planned at the end of FY 1991 for employees who have used demonstration projects and other special initiatives to improve services to multi-cultural groups.
13. Utilize neighbor-to-neighbor (Elmer) concept of all client groups in promoting conservation.	Ongoing. To date, two pilot demonstration projects have been funded; FOTG workshops scheduled for FY 1992; SCS materials pertinent to small limited resource farmers displayed at two conferences; information disseminated to Tribal Councils during civil rights compliance reviews; program outreach initiative being carried out by western and midwestern state conservationists aimed at reaching American Indians.
14. Provide information to states and NTCs.	Completed. Information provided to states in February 1991, as part of national bulletin number 360-1-33.
15. Incorporate WFD and cultural awareness into TQM training.	Completed.
16. Work with NACD at the national level to encourage and assist them in getting information on WFD out to SWCDs.	Ongoing. TQM materials being developed include references to the value and benefit of diversity.

Recommendation	*Status of Recommendation (6-15-91)*
17. Include WFD in Chief's address at NACD Convention in February 1991.	Completed. WFD was incorporated into SCS briefing at regional NACD meeting. NACD is in agreement with this effort and is developing a strategy to provide information to districts.
18. Incorporate a brief description about cultural diversity in locations listed in vacancy announcements.	Completed. Statement will be shown in all SCS and USDA vacancy announcements issued after June 28, 1991.

PHASE III

1. Develop WFD conference report and recommendations based on 18 work group reports.	Task force report recommendations were completed by July 18 and presented to chief and staff on July 31.
2. Assign responsibilities for developing policy to implement approved recommendations.	Completed. William Rice, Deputy Chief for Administration, has been assigned this responsibility.

Appendix E

Task Force Membership

A Work Force Diversity Task Force was appointed to address the concerns expressed at the conference and to prepare a report containing recommendations. The members selected represent a cross section of the SCS work force. They are:

HUMBERTO HERNANDEZ, Director Caribbean Area, SCS, San Juan, Puerto Rico (Co-Chair)

LAWRENCE E. CLARK, Deputy State Conservationist, SCS, Indianapolis, Indiana. (Co-Chair)

ELESA K. COTTRELL, State Conservationist, SCS, Dover, Delaware. (Member)

GEORGE C. NORRIS, State Conservationist, SCS, Richmond, Virginia. (Member)

P. DWIGHT HOLMAN, Deputy State Conservationist, SCS, Lakewood, Colorado. (Member)

MAXINE H. BARRON, Program Analyst, Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis, SCS, Washington, D.C. (Member)

SARAH M. EPPS, Program Assistant, Technology, SCS, Washington, D.C. (Member)

SYLVIA GILLEN, RC&D Coordinator, SCS, East Central Colorado RC&D Area, Limon, Colorado. (Member)

WILLIAM E. GARDNER, Associate Deputy Chief, Administration, SCS, Washington, D.C. (Member)

MANLY S. WILDER, Deputy Chief for Strategic Planning and Budget Analysis, SCS, Washington, D.C. (Advisor)

This report is the product of the efforts of many people. The Task Force thanks Martha Marbury, Chief, EEO Branch, Washington, D.C., for her significant contribution. Also, Patricia A. Paul, Public Affairs Specialist, SCS, Syracuse, New York, and Sarah L. Laurent, Writer-Editor, SCS, Washington, D.C., are to be commended for their many useful ideas and long hours spent meticulously editing this report.